

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 1. (Currently amended): A method for obtaining postage comprising:
2 accessing a first web server by communicating first HTML content to said first
3 web server;
4 receiving ~~hypertext information~~second HTML content from said first web server,
5 said ~~hypertext information~~second HTML content including postage-related content;
6 displaying said ~~hypertext information~~second HTML content;
7 detecting user input in the form of third HTML content indicating selection of
8 said postage-related content; and
9 in response to said detecting, communicating fourth HTML content to said first
10 web server and receiving from said first server information for printing an indicium ~~that~~
11 ~~originates from a second web server~~ including an exchange of secured socket layer (SSL)
12 protocol data between said first web server and said second web server;
13 ~~wherein said first server and said second server, each is configured as a web~~
14 ~~server, whereby said first server and said second server can communicate over the world wide~~
15 ~~web.~~

1 2. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein said detecting includes
2 transmitting said user input to said first server.

1 3. (Original): The method of claim 1 further including printing said
2 information for printing an indicium on a printable medium.

1 4. (Original): The method of claim 3 wherein said receiving said
2 information for printing an indicium includes receiving a printing software component, said
3 printing including executing said printing software component.

1 5. (Original): The method of claim 3 wherein said printing is initiated in
2 response to said receiving said information for printing an indicium, absent user intervention.

1 6. (Original): The method of claim 3 wherein said printing is initiated in
2 response to a user request to print said information for printing an indicium.

1 7. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein said information for printing
2 an indicium is a bitmap image.

1 8. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein said information for printing
2 an indicium is postage indicium data.

1 9. (Original): The method of claim 1 further including selecting a
2 background image, said background image to be combined with said information for printing an
3 indicium.

1 10. (Original): The method of claim 1 further including sending a background
2 image to said first server, said receiving said information for printing an indicium including
3 incorporation of said background image to said information for printing an indicium.

11. (Canceled)

1 12. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein said second server is a postal
2 server.

1 13. (Currently amended): A computer program product for obtaining postage,
2 comprising:

3 code configured to operate a data processor to perform a step of accessing a first
4 server by communicating first hypertext mark-up language (HTML) content to said first web
5 server;

code configured to operate a data processor to perform a step of receiving
~~hypertext information~~ second HTML content from said first server, said ~~hypertext information~~
second HTML content including postage-related content;

code configured to operate a data processor to perform a step of displaying said
second HTML content ~~hypertext information~~;

code configured to operate a data processor to perform a step of detecting user
input in the form of third HTML content indicating selection of said postage-related content;

code configured to operate a data processor to perform a step of communicating
fourth HTML content to said first server and receiving from said first server information
configured to operate a data processor to perform a step of printing an indicium ~~that originates~~
~~from~~, said information being obtained via an interaction between said first server and a second
server involving an exchange of SSL protocols between said first eb server and said second
server, in response to said detecting; and

a computer-readable medium for storing said codes,
wherein the second server is configured as a web server.

14. (Original): The computer program product of claim 13 wherein said code
for detecting includes code for transmitting said user input to said first server.

15. (Original): The computer program product of claim 13 further including
code for printing said information for printing an indicium on a printable medium.

16. (Original): The computer program product of claim 15 wherein said code
for receiving includes code for receiving a printing software component, said code for printing
including code for executing said printing software component.

17. (Original): The computer program product of claim 15 wherein said code
for printing is initiated in response to receiving said information for printing an indicium, absent
user intervention.

1 18. (Original): The computer program product of claim 15 wherein said code
2 for printing is initiated in response to a user request to print said information for printing an
3 indicium.

1 19. (Original): The computer program product of claim 13 wherein said
2 information for printing an indicium comprises a bitmap image.

1 20. (Original): The computer program product of claim 13 wherein said
2 information for printing an indicium comprises postage indicium data.

1 21. (Original): The computer program product of claim 13 further including
2 code for receiving a background image from said first server, said background image to be
3 combined with said information for printing an indicium.

1 22. (Original): The computer program product of claim 13 further including
2 code for sending a background image to said first server, said first server combining said
3 background image with said information for printing an indicium.

1 23. (Currently amended): A method for dispensing postage comprising:
2 receiving first HTML content comprising requests for postage from one or more
3 users at a first server system;

4 ~~communicating~~ exchanging one or more SSL protocol messages with a second
5 server system, including communicating said requests for postage to said second server, said
6 second server system providing information for printing indicia; ~~and~~

7 receiving said information for printing indicia from said second server system; ~~and~~
8 and

9 ~~wherein communicating second HTML content containing~~ said information for
10 printing indicia ~~is then distributed to said one or more users to satisfy said requests for postage,~~

11 wherein said second server system is configured as a web server to receive said
12 requests for postage from said first server.

1 24. (Original): The method of claim 23 further including receiving user-
2 provided information from said one or more users relating to a payment mechanism, wherein
3 said requests for postage each includes a user-provided information, wherein said providing
4 information for printing indicia includes verifying payment of said postage based on said user-
5 provided information.

1 25. (Original): The method of claim 24 wherein said user-provided
2 information is credit card information.

1 26. (Original): The method of claim 23 wherein said requests for postage
2 each includes a payment mechanism associated with said first server system, wherein said
3 providing information for printing indicia includes verifying payment of said postage based on
4 said payment mechanism.

1 27. (Original): The method of claim 23 wherein said information for printing
2 indicia comprises one or more bitmap images.

1 28. (Original): The method of claim 23 wherein said information for printing
2 indicia comprises one or more postage indicium data.

1 29. (Original): The method of claim 23 further including providing
2 background image information for enhancing said information for printing indicia.

1 30. (Original): The method of claim 23 wherein said communicating is based
2 on XML protocols.

1 31. (Original): The method of claim 23 wherein said second server system
2 transmits a postage printing software component to said first server system.

1 32. (Currently amended): A computer-readable medium containing computer
2 instructions arranged to operate a computer system to dispense postage to users by performing
3 the method steps of:

receiving a request for postage from one or more of said users in the form of first HTML content;

communicating with a web server system, including communicating said requests for postage to said web server system using SSL protocol, said web server system providing information for printing indicia; and

receiving said information for printing indicia from said web server system, wherein said information for printing indicia is then distributed to said one or more users to satisfy said requests for postage.

33. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 further containing instructions to control said computer system to include, with each of said requests for postage, a user-provided payment mechanism, wherein said providing information for printing indicia includes verifying payment of said postage based on said user-provided payment mechanism.

34. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 33 further containing instructions to control said computer system to receive information relating to said user-provided payment mechanism from said one or more users.

35. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 34 wherein said payment mechanism is a credit card.

36. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 further containing instructions to control said computer system to include, with each of said requests for postage, a payment mechanism associated with said first server system, wherein said providing information for printing indicia includes verifying payment of said postage based on said payment mechanism.

37. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 wherein said information for printing indicia comprises one or more bitmap images.

1 38. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 wherein said
2 information for printing indicia comprises one or more postage indicium data.

1 39. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 further containing
2 instructions to control said computer system to provide background image information for
3 enhancing said information for printing indicia.

1 40. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 further including
2 instructions for communicating with said second server system using XML protocols.

1 41. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 further including
2 instructions for receiving from said second server system a postage printing software component.

1 42. (Currently amended): A method for distributing postage comprising:
2 providing a first server system configured as a web server;
3 providing a second server system configured as a web server;
4 receiving, at said first server system, requests for postage from users in the form
5 of HTML content;
6 sending said requests for postage to said second server system using SSL
7 protocol, including providing a payment mechanism to pay for said postage;
8 dispensing postage from said second server system to said first server system
9 using SSL protocol, including validating payment for said postage based on said payment
10 mechanism; and
11 distributing said postage from said first server system in the form of HTML
12 content to satisfy said requests for postage.

1 43. (Original): The method of claim 42 wherein said requests for postage
2 each includes a user-provided payment mechanism.

1 44. (Original): The method of claim 42 wherein said requests for postage
2 each includes a payment mechanism associated only with said first server system.

1 45. (Original): The method of claim 42 wherein said distributing said postage
2 is a step of transmitting information for printing one or more indicia to said users.

1 46. (Original): The method of claim 42 wherein said first server system is
2 separate from said second server system.

1 47. (Previously presented): The method of claim 42 wherein said dispensing
2 postage includes sending a postage request from said first server system to said second server
3 system.

1 48. (Original): The method of claim 47 wherein said postage request is based
2 on a single request for postage.

1 49. (Original): The method of claim 47 wherein said postage request is based
2 on more than one request for postage.

1 50. (Original): The method of claim 42 wherein said distributing said postage
2 includes transmitting a postage printing software component.

1 51. (Previously presented): The method of claim 42 wherein said second
2 server is a postal server.

1 52. (Original): The method of claim 42 wherein said second server system
2 dispenses postage in the form of information for printing one or more indicia.

1 53. (Original): The method of claim 52 wherein said information for printing
2 one or more indicia comprises one or more bitmap images.

1 54. (Original): The method of claim 52 wherein said information for printing
2 one or more indicia comprises postage indicium data.

1 55. (Original): The method of claim 52 further including providing one or
2 more background images for selection by said users; said distributing said postage including
3 combining one or more selected ones of said background images with said information for
4 printing one or more indicia.

1 56. (Currently amended): A system for distributing postage to plural users,
2 comprising:
3 a postal server system comprising a web server component;
4 a first server system separate from said postal server system and in
5 communication therewith over a data communication network using SSL protocol; and
6 a second server system separate from said postal server system and in
7 communication therewith over said data communication network using SSL protocol,
8 said first and second server systems each configured to receive postage requests
9 from users for purchasing postage in the form of HTML content,
10 said first and second server systems each further configured to send requests to
11 said postal server system in the form of SSL protocol to obtain postage from said postal server
12 system, wherein said web server component receives said requests,
13 said first and second server systems each further configured to transmit said
14 postage to said users in the form of HTML content, thereby satisfying said postage requests.

1 57. (Original): The system of claim 56 wherein said postage comprises
2 information for printing indicia.

1 58. (Previously presented): The system of claim 57 wherein said information
2 for printing indicia comprises postage indicium data.

1 59. (Previously presented): The system of claim 57 wherein said information
2 for printing indicia comprises bitmap information.

1 60. (Previously presented): The system of claim 56 wherein said first server
2 system is configured to include a user-provided payment mechanism in its requests to obtain
3 postage.

1 61. (Previously presented): The system of claim 60 wherein said payment
2 mechanism is a credit card.

1 62. (Original): The system of claim 56 wherein said first server system
2 includes a payment mechanism, said first server system configured to include said payment
3 mechanism in its requests to obtain postage, said payment mechanism being associated with said
4 first server system.

1 63. (Original): The method of claim 56 wherein said data communication
2 network includes a secure communication channel.

1 64. (Previously presented): The method of claim 63 wherein said secure
2 communication channel is based on a data transmission protocol, including XML protocol.

1 65. (Previously presented): The method of claim 63 wherein said secure
2 communication channel is a land line.